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STATE FOR IIP/IR BCONATY, EUR/PPD MCROUCH,
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ROME FOR IRO LHOHMANN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: FY 2010 Request for Sustaining Funds-American Corners Greece

1. Introduction and Summary: Embassy Athens requests \$54,800 in FY10 funds to strengthen programs at the six American Corners (ACs) in Greece: Xanthi (northeastern Greece), Veria (northwestern Greece), Sparta (southern Greece), Corfu (western Greece), the Hellenic American Union (HAU) in central Athens, and the American Corner in the wider Athens municipality of Nea Philadelphia. Requested funds will be used for participation of AC Directors in a training workshop organized by Athens IRC; a series of American Culture Week presentations and workshops at Veria, Xanthi, Nea Philadelphia, and Hellenic American Union; speaker programming; book orders; and equipment upgrades. Major accomplishments in FY09 were the significantly increased number of programs in all six American Corners and the formation of partnerships between ACs and local entities reaching wide audiences in their communities. The American Corners in Greece and their programming specifically fit into Post's PD program through outreach to diverse, critical audiences, including youth and Muslims; and by ensuring that popular English Language teaching materials are widely available in the major regions of Greece. End Introduction and Summary.

2. IRO Laura Kaspari Hohmann has reviewed this proposal and concurs.

3. Regarding usage of FY09 Sustaining Funds and their impact on the American Corners, six new television sets and six DVD players were purchased. A substantial number of books were ordered for all our six ACs. This equipment upgrade and the new book titles will extend ACs program base and will attract more visitors in hosting institutions. In addition, three ACs used FY09 sustaining funds as follows:

--Hellenic American Union: Purchase of poster display stands for a more dynamic program of poster show presentations.

--Nea Philadelphia: Replacing of new PC and printer to be used by AC visitors.

--Xanthi: A new set of book shelves was ordered for the extended book collection.

--Veria: Recent books on innovation and new technologies were ordered in order to satisfy the reading needs for this specific thematic group.

--Two hundred English language teachers and more than 200 high school children took part in five storytelling workshops presented by a professional Chicago storyteller. This program provided us the opportunity to build new relationships with local municipal and educational authorities, opening up lines of communication for future collaborations.

4. The amount of Post funds provided in FY09 excluding sustainability funds is \$ 4,691.76 to cover honoraria and travel expenses for program speakers and a jazz group as well as ordering paper shows and printed promotional material.

15. No private donations were received by the American Corners in Greece for this rating period.

16. All American Corners managed to almost double the number of their programs (56 in 2009, vice 33 in 2008). The wide thematic range and a professional organizational level guaranteed this successful outcome. The list of programs per AC is as follows:

--Hellenic American Union: Trick or Treat fun in a Halloween party (October 2008). Lecture on Civil Rights Movement and today's multiracial American society (February 2009). Lecture on the genre of the American short story (April 2009). Series of presentations of the life and work of the American novelists Jack Kerouac (March/April 2009), John Steinbeck (January 2009), Mark Twain (November 2009). Book reading on the environment by AC staff and English language teachers (June 2009). Celebrating Independence Day (July 2009). Presentation on Columbus Day (October 2009). Wii gaming night (November 2009). Christmas party (December 2009).

--Xanthi: Halloween party (October 2008). Theatrical performance of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" by twenty junior high school students (December 2008). Lecture on Major Accomplishments in African - American Literature (February 2009). Film showing on International Children's Day (April 2009). Environmental-related film showing (May 2009). Eli Yamin Blues Band performing in Xanthi in an AC partnership with local folk art museum (May 2009). Lecture on Greek diaspora co-organized with local educational and cultural association (December 2009).

ATHENS 00000054 002 OF 003

--Nea Philadelphia: Presentation on Celebrating the holiday season in the U.S. (December 2008). Two Black History Month related events at a private elementary school and an English language school (February 2009). Columbus Day celebration event (October 2009). Presentation on Thanksgiving (November 2009). Series of workshops on American photography (December 2009).

--Sparti: Embassy photographer presented the topic American Photography: Roadtrip to America (November 2008). Special holiday presentation (December 2009). Black History Month related event with Embassy speaker (February 2009). Creative writing exercises and short theatrical performances as an approach to teaching English (May 2009). Workshop entitled "Art of Dynamic Storytelling" presented by a professional Chicago-based storyteller (October 2009). Halloween party (November 2009).

--Veria: Lecture on "Accomplishments of African-American Artists and Authors" (February 2009). Showings of documentary film "Obama" and an adaptation of Alice Walker's short story "Everyday Use" for high school children. Both films were shown in support of English language teaching (March/April 2009). Three trivia contests on the topics of climate change, American films, and the Independence Day (August 2009)

--Corfu: Black History related film showing of "Everyday Use" for a private English language school (February 2009). Showing of "Abraham Lincoln: Preserving the Nation" at the auditorium of Corfu Medical Society (February 2009). Two workshops for English language teachers on storytelling as an interactive technique to enhance student's verbal expressions (October 2009).

--Note: All six American Corners organized U.S. Election-related book exhibits (October - November 2008). Our AC partners participated in the promotional campaign of two youth initiatives "My Culture + Your Culture" and "Democracy is..." by posting announcements, contest poster, flyers and postcards (November - December 2008). Book exhibits, paper shows and educational programs were organized by the staff at the six American Corners participating in the celebration of Native American Indian Heritage Month (November 2009).

17. Media Coverage

Most IRCs received good to very good local media coverage in 2009. There was significant coverage of all programs on HAU and Veria Public Central Library websites. Veria, in addition, promotes all

its programs by posting photos on Flickr platform. Extensive local media coverage was noted with two programs in Xanthi. Both the jazz performance and the lecture on Greek diaspora were highlighted in print and electronic media of the city of Xanthi.

¶8. Training and professional development

The coordinators from the six American Corners participated in the "Jump Start Your American Corner" workshop in Vienna, October 13 - 15, 2009. This workshop reviewed the fundamentals of good AC management, discussed working with the Embassy and the local institutions and explored techniques for successful programming, including marketing strategies and using volunteers and alumni. Participants took part in problem-solving exercises and hands-on exercises that demonstrated good management and programming. Our AC coordinators left this workshop armed with techniques and strategies to help overcome challenges and with new ideas to run an effective AC.

¶9. Plan of action for the near future. A key component for 2010 programming will be the series of workshops and presentations on American culture organized by Fulbrighter and playwright from New York City Catherine Rogers, who will work along with faculty members and graduate students of American Literature departments in Athens and Thessaloniki. This programming platform, called "Week of American Culture," will be hosted by the ACs in Veria, Xanthi, HAU and Nea Philadelphia and will include theatrical sketches, lectures on American drama, literature, poetry and film showings to showcase the variety of contemporary American culture.

¶10. Of special note is the launching of an American Corners website in early 2010. Funded by Post and administered by Athens IRC staff, the new site will promote the network of our ACs with a wide range of links related with Greek and American libraries, sites on American culture and education as well as related bibliographies and articles for innovative programming. It will highlight all the programs run by our ACs so far but will also tout all upcoming ACs events and programs. The new site, along with the existing group in the Facebook social application, will further improve the electronic presence of American Corners in Greece.

ATHENS 00000054 003 OF 003

¶11. Post also hopes to sponsor a countrywide training program for the six American Corners. Our goal is to share best practices and discuss efforts for new partnerships with the local environment of each AC. This training will highlight successes, brainstorm for other new ideas and encourage AC coordinators to further develop a network among themselves.

¶12. Post requests \$54,800 in sustaining funds for FY10 to address AC needs as follows:

- ¶A. Periodicals for 6 Corners: \$800 each, total: \$4,800
- ¶B. Books and DVDs for 6 Corners: \$5,000 each, total: \$30,000
- ¶C. American Culture Week: presentations/workshops in Nea Philadelphia/HAU/Veria/Xanthi including travel expenses for one escort: \$10,000
- ¶D. Local training workshop/travel of Corner Directors: \$5,000
- ¶E. Speaker programming: \$4,000
- ¶F. Operating expenses (photocopying, mailing, etc.): \$1,000

Combined Request for 6 Corners: \$54,800

Post plans to use \$5,000 of post funds for AC operations in FY10.

Compliance issues

¶13. All six American Corners were established with MOUs signed by the Embassy and the host institution, and all are posted on the AC Central database. Post has a designated editor for the ACCD. The records are complete and up-to-date. Each AC is in compliance with core characteristics. Details are available on request.
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